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ABSTRACT

Information is presented on women as students, women graduates in the job market, women as faculty members and administrators, and the status of affirmative action. Women's enrollment in undergraduate education, traditional and nontraditional majors, enrollment in graduate and professional schools, degrees earned, dropout information, and the salary and status of women faculty members and administrators are covered. Vigorous enforcement of federal laws is advocated to provide equal opportunity in higher education and equal access to jobs upon graduation. Affirmative action plans, with goals and timetables, are needed, since the statistics show women are unemployed more often than men, underemployed, and more often underpaid. Being qualified is not yet enough to guarantee equality of opportunity. (SW)

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FACTS ABOUT WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Discrimination against women is alive and well on the nation's campuses.

Some gains have been made. We document them, as well as the losses, in this fact sheet. More women than ever before are going to college and getting their degrees -- some in fields like engineering and architecture, once considered for men only. Record numbers of women are going to graduate and professional schools -- by 1978 an estimated 20 per cent of the new lawyers and doctors will be women. With each annual commencement ceremony, the pool of qualified women expands.

But the facts reveal that for a woman, BEING QUALIFIED IS NOT ENOUGH.

Despite Title IX and other federal laws and regulations prohibiting sex discrimination, women are still consistently more likely than their male counterparts to be unemployed or underemployed and underpaid. For example: women who have met all the conventional criteria for rewards in higher education, who are well equipped with degrees and publications and all the rest, these women are the victims of the greatest salary inequity. The mean salary in 1976-77 for a male professor was $23,828; for his female colleague, $21,512. The dollar gap: $2,316.

Being qualified is not yet enough. We need vigorous enforcement of federal laws before women can be confident of equal opportunity in higher education and equal access to jobs upon graduation. We need affirmative action plans, with goals and timetables. We need to challenge discrimination in the courts and to support our colleagues who are plaintiffs.

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Old myths still prevail. Institutions of higher education advertise their commitments to affirmative action and equal opportunity, but in the corridors and the lunchrooms and, of course, the groves of academe, you still hear that women are "bad risks" -- they drop out, they don't write their dissertations. There does appear to be evidence that women have a higher attrition rate in graduate school than men. But to stop there, and to intimate that women drop out because they are innately unmotivated to achieve or excel is to be guilty of gross insensitivity to the condition of women.

An HEW study, "Barriers to Women's Participation in Postsecondary Education," documents the various discriminatory institutional policies and procedures that make it difficult for women to complete their degrees. For example, HEW cites a study of Harvard graduate students in 1970 which found that women did not drop out if given equal opportunities, such as equal chances for financial aid, fellowships and assistantships. The HEW report noted that women are concentrated in fields where there is a high drop out rate for men also -- education and the humanities.

Moveover, fewer and fewer women are dropping out every year; more and more women are getting those degrees.

Indeed, as undergraduates, according to data from the American Council on Education, women are more likely than men to receive the baccalaureate within four years.

Which brings us to our refrain: being qualified is not yet enough to guarantee equality of opportunity. Look what happens to those women who persevere: they are exceptionally strong and ambitious and qualified, yet statistics show they are unemployed more often than men, underemployed, and more often underpaid. Maybe women dropouts should be seen in a more flattering light: they weren't deluded by the equal opportunity slogans.

WOMEN AS STUDENTS

ENROLLMENTS

Undergraduate enrollment of women has jumped 45%, from 3 million in 1970 to almost 4.4 million in 1975 (compared to a 21% increase for men, from 4.4 million to slightly over 5.3 million). The number of women aged 25 to 34 attending college and graduate school rose more than 100% from 1970-76, while the number under age 25 increased by 30%. Nevertheless, there were fewer women than men attending college in 1975.

A study from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education revealed than many colleges which responded to declining enrollments of younger students by recruiting older women made inadequate efforts to respond to the special needs of these non-traditional students. The educational institutions that conducted successful programs had to do more than offer back-to-school orientation sessions and new brochures. Implementing a quality program for older women students often meant revising class schedules, financial aid systems, faculty composition, and courses of study.

TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL MAJORS

Women continue to major in the few fields where they have traditionally clustered. In 1975-76, they were:

72.6% of the majors in education;
64.2% of the majors in health professions;
59.1% of English or journalism majors;
48% of the humanities majors; and
44.4% of the social science majors.

But women are a growing minority in traditionally male fields. The American Council on Education reports that 17% of women college freshmen intend to become business executives, doctors, lawyers or engineers, as opposed to only 6% a decade ago.

In 1974, women were 7% of the engineering majors (up from 2% in 1966), and 14% of the majors in agriculture and forestry (up from 3% in 1966). In the last ten years, more women earned bachelor's degrees in the following non-traditional fields:

computer science -- 18.9% in 1975, up from 4.6% in 1965;
mathematics -- 41.8% in 1975, from about a third in 1965; and
architecture and environmental design -- 17.4% in 1975, from 5.3% in 1970.

At the master's level, degrees awarded to women in architecture and math rose by 12.5 percentage points over the decade to reach 20.3% and 32.9% respectively in 1975; in communications (including advertising, journalism and radio/television), degrees awarded to women rose by 16.6 percentage points over the decade to reach 42.1% in 1975.

WOMEN IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

Graduate and professional school enrollment among women rose about 75% between 1970 and 1975, compared to an increase of 23% for men. But their representation is still relatively small; from 1970-75, the percentage of women increased

in law, from 7.5% to 23.4%
in veterinary medicine, from 8 % to 20.4%
in dentistry, from 1.4% to 7%.

Women were 24% of the full-time students in graduate science programs in 1974, a 13% increase over 1973. The number of men increased by 3%.

In medical school, latest statistics show women are a full 25% of the 1976-77 freshmen class (up from 9% in 1970). The number of medical schools with female enrollments of 30% or more has also increased. At some schools, the proportion of women medical students is above the national average of 25%: Medical College of Pennsylvania -- 62% women; State University of New York, Stony Brook -- 46% women; Rutgers -- 36% women; Harvard -- 35% women.

This year the ratio of acceptances to applications was higher for women medical students than for men -- 35.7% of all male applicants were accepted, while 38% of all female applicants were accepted. This does not mean, as a headline in the New York Times suggested, that it is easier for women to get into medical school than for men. Even if 50% of the men and 50% of the women were admitted, this equal rate of admission would not guarantee equal access. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, men and women who were accepted for medical school in 1973-74 had similar qualifications; however, the women accepted had slightly higher mean college grade point averages than the men.

DEGREES EARNED

From 1974 to 1976, the total number of doctorates has remained nearly constant (32,923 in 1976), but women are earning a larger proportion of them. Women earned 23.3% of all doctorates granted in 1976. This is an all-time high, exceeding the previous high figure of 20.5% in 1945 which was associated with the large drop in male doctorates during World War II.

Advanced degrees in education, arts and humanities, and social sciences account for 80% of the increase in women doctorates over the past decade.

Between 1972 and 1975, doctorates awarded to minority women increased by 133% -- from 414 to 964.

In 1975, women earned 15.1% of the law degrees, as compared to 5.6% in 1970. It is expected that in 1978 women will receive over 20% of the degrees awarded in medicine, veterinary medicine and law, and about 10% of those in dentistry.

ARE WOMEN MORE LIKELY TO DROP OUT?

Data from the American Council on Education shows that women are more likely than men to receive the bachelor's within four years after college entry. For instance, of 1968 first-time, full-time freshmen followed up four years later, 44% of men but 53% of women had received their degrees.

Degree performance varied by type of institution: in four-year colleges, 65% of the women but 55% of the men received the baccalaureate within four years. The corresponding figures for those enrolled in universities were 60% and 51% respectively.

Women maintained their lead in baccalaureate completion five years after college entry: among 1966 freshmen followed up five years later in 1971, 64% of the women but 59% of the men had received the degree. Men caught up eventually, however; among 1961 freshmen followed up in 1971, i.e., 10 years after college entry, 83% of the men and 81% of the women had at least the bachelor's degree.

As for women in graduate school, the Census Bureau found that women represented about half of all the first year students in 1975, but after the first year or more, they accounted for only one-third of all graduate students. While this is an improvement over the 22% figure recorded in 1970, the implication is that women have a higher attrition rate than men.

We do not have enough data on the attrition rate of doctoral students in general to draw any conclusions. However, latest statistics from the National Research Council on women law students show that:

- equal proportions of men and women earn their law degrees within the standard three-year period;
- there is no appreciable difference in attrition rates for men and women. In fact, women had slightly lower attrition rates for the period between 1970 and 1975.

We also know that those women who earn graduate degrees do so at virtually the same rate as their male counterparts. The 1976 statistics from the National Research Council show that men receive their doctorates at a median age of 31.3; women earn them at 32.6. The median time lapse between bachelor's degree and doctorate is 8.4 years for men and 9.7 years for women, but both groups are actually registered as graduate students for about 6 years.

A slightly higher percentage of women than men planned employment immediately after earning their doctorates, 78.8% of the women as compared to 75.8% of the men. But more men planned postdoctoral studies, 17.6% of the men compared to 13.2% of the women.

WOMEN GRADUATES IN THE JOB MARKET

What we have, in the final analysis, is a core group of exceptionally well motivated and well qualified women. The question is: Do they have equal access to available jobs? The answer is no. They are more likely than their male counterparts to be unemployed or underemployed, and underpaid.

The proportion of women who received their doctorates in 1976 and who were seeking employment was 26.5% compared with 19.7% for men. These figures suggest that the availability pool of women is larger than the actual percentage of doctorates they earn, 23.3% in 1976, because of their higher unemployment rate.

With the exception of only a couple of fields, women doctorates had higher unemployment rates than their counterparts. The following data are from the National Research Council report for 1976:

Employment Status at Time of Doctorate	Men	Women
Definite employment at time of doctorate	56.1%	52.3%
Seeking employment	19.7%	26.5%
Seeking employment in:		
Engineering	21.7%	34.0%
Agricultural Sciences	19.7%	31.5%
English Lang. and Lit.	33.4%	38.4%
Foreign Lang. and Lit.	33.5%	37.5%
Other Arts and Humanities	26.4%	37.2%
Professional fields	12.6%	22.1%

For women science and engineering PhD's in general (not only recent graduates), the unemployment rate is higher than for men: 3% for women in 1975, 0.8% for men. The percentage of women who were employed part-time and seeking full-time employment was 2.4% in 1975, as compared to 0.5% for men.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

Women college graduates age 25 or older received a median income of $10,357 in 1974. Their male counterparts earned $17,188.

In 1975, women PhD's in science made about $4,500 less than their male counterparts. Women doctoral engineers earned about $4,000 less than male engineers. The salary gap increased with age, the largest difference occurring in the 55-59 age group.

In the humanities and social sciences, where women graduates predominate, beginning salary offers for women in 1976 were about 10 per cent lower than for men, according to the College Placement Council.

WOMEN AS FACULTY MEMBERS

RANK

The percentage of women on faculties, at all levels, at all kinds of institutions, has crept upward at a painfully slow rate over the last couple of years. In 1974 women were 23.8% of full-time faculty, according to government figures; AAUP figures were slightly lower. Latest HEW statistics estimate women as slightly over 25% of the 1976-77 faculty.

In general, fewer new people are being hired in academia. The number of full-time faculty increased by only 2.1% or 7,715 persons, during the one year period between 1974-75 and 1975-76. The gain included more men (4,151) than women (3,564). But relative to their numbers in 1974-75, employment of women increased by 4% while men increased by only 1.5%.

There were gains by women among all the ranks and the percentage increases favored women at each of the ranks except professor: four times as many men as women were promoted to the top rank. Women are concentrated in the lower ranks.

Women are best represented on the faculties of two-year institutions, where salaries are lower than at four-year institutions with graduate schools, according to the AAUP.

Percent Women Among Full-Time Faculty

Academic Rank	1974-75	1975-76
All ranks combined	23.8	24.3
Professor	9.8	9.6
Associate Professor	16.8	17.1
Assistant Professor	27.2	28.8
Instructor	40.4	40.6
Lecturers	39.6	41.4
Undesignated rank	33.2	33.2

SALARY

Five years ago Astin and Bayer reported that women full professors made an average of $1700 less than their male counterparts. That gap has widened to $2,316 according to 1976-77 salary figures from HEW.

Mean Salaries of Full-Time Faculty 1976-77

Rank	Men	Women	Gap
All ranks	$18,269	$15,039	$3,230
Professor	23,828	21,512	2,316
Associate Professor	18,003	17,211	792
Assistant Professor	14,815	14,134	681
Instructor	12,234	11,501	733
Lecturer	13,245	11,838	1,407
Undesignated rank	17,211	15,403	1,808

In general, women are getting raises at the same rate as men (about 5% for 1976-77), but salary inequity still prevails because of the gap which existed in the first place.

TENURE

In 1976-77, women were 44.4% of the tenured faculty members. They fared better at public institutions, where they were 47.6% of the tenured faculty, than at private institutions, where they were 35.1%. These figures represent a slight gain for women in the past year.

WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION

Two new surveys of women in administration show that not only have they failed to achieve equality, but their status has not improved at all in the last four years. The surveys, based on data as current as 1977, show:

- That women are paid about four-fifths as much as men with the same job titles at the same type of institution;
- That of the key administrative positions at all institutions surveyed, 79% were held by white men. White women held 14%, minority men 5%, and minority women 2%;
- That the only administrative job in which both females and males, whites and minority group members had a balanced representation is that of "affirmative action officer";
- That among affirmative action officers, men are paid more than women.

Studies published by the College and University Personnel Association also show that females hold 52% of the administrative jobs at women's colleges, compared with 14% at white coeducational colleges. However, at women's colleges, white men hold more than two-thirds of the chief executive and top-level positions.

The only spots where women can be found in substantial numbers are middle- and low-level posts that almost never lead to top academic positions. Women occupy seven of the eight lowest-paying professional positions on campus, including such posts as bookstore manager, registrar, and director of student housing.

Only about 1% of all the presidents of public four-year colleges and public and private universities are women. This year, none of the 65 presidents of private universities is a woman.

Of the women who are college presidents, the vast majority head either Roman Catholic or women's colleges.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

All institutions with federal contracts totaling $50,000 or more and 50 or more employees must, under the provisions of Executive Order 11246, as amended, have a written affirmative action plan * which includes numerical goals and timetables for hiring women and minorities. Equal employment opportunity is also mandated by numerous state and local laws as well as by federal legislation that includes Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The latter requires educational institutions to evaluate their own policies and procedures for potential discriminatory impact and to take remedial actions to eliminate sex discrimination.

Many of these laws have been on the books for five years or more. Our statistics show that despite this, discrimination is alive and well on the nation's campuses.

On March 17, 1977, HEW reported that a staggering number of colleges and universities, 2,134 out of a total 3,472, had either failed to submit the required forms attesting to their compliance with Title IX or had filed inadequate assurance statements. But not one institution of higher education has lost a single federal contract because of noncompliance with sex discrimination laws.

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* For more information, see WEAL Fund's Higher Education Kit which includes a Chart of Federal Laws and Regulations Prohibiting Sex Discrimination.

Women's Equity Action League joined with other organizations to file suit in 1974 against the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Department of Labor for inadequately enforcing anti-discrimination laws in elementary, secondary, and higher education. This litigation has resulted in a court order that requires the timely processing of complaints filed with HEW against elementary and secondary schools in 17 southern and border states, but time frames for institutions of higher education have not been agreed upon, and large backlogs of complaints have accumulated.

It is imperative that we keep up the pressure for vigorous enforcement of federal laws so that one day, for women and men alike, being qualified will be enough to guarantee equality of opportunity in all aspects of higher education.

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THE WEAL EDUCATIONAL AND LEGAL DEFENSE FUND was incorporated as a non-profit tax-exempt organization in 1972. WEAL Fund's goal is to secure legal and economic rights for women by carrying on educational and research projects in the area of sex discrimination, by monitoring the implementation and enforcement of civil rights and other laws, and by initiating and supporting law suits in the field of equal rights. We have received a Ford Foundation grant to support our intern program for students and other individuals. Project activities include analyzing women's access to fellowships and training opportunities, developing a sports clearinghouse, working on the Decade for Women World Plan of Action, monitoring the status and role of women in the military, and influencing public policy in education and employment by cooperating with other public interest groups.

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